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THE SOURCES OF JONATHAN EDWARDS'S IDEALISM.

TO the student of American philosophy the question of the sources of Jonathan Edwards's Idealism has always been of interest. Not only do the philosophical reflections of the fifteen-year-old college student mark the first stirrings of the greatest philosophical mind America has produced, but they mark also the beginnings of constructive philosophy in America. To search the intellectual history of Edwards is to ask, not merely for the antecedents of a great thinker, but for the genealogy of a new race. Americans have been eager to establish on behalf of their great thinker the claim of independence and originality. President Noah Porter and Professor M. C. Tyler have been among those to defend Edwards against the charge that he was but repeating the ideas of Berkeley, and they have been able to secure, at least, a verdict of not proven.

The difficult problem, as to how the fifteen-year-old Edwards in the country town of Wethersfield became the exponent of a full-fledged theory of idealism, has been raised again, however, by Professor Gardiner in his admirable article on the idealism of Edwards, in a recent number of the *PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW*,¹ and again it has been left without a solution. The purpose of this article is to show that the *Clavis Universalis* of Arthur Collier is the key to the mystery, and that we may regard it at least as highly probable that it was this work which first turned Edwards's thoughts in the direction of idealism. This solution of the question I first proposed, in July, 1899, in a thesis submitted for the doctorate at the University of Halle.

The story of Edwards's college years, and the circumstances under which the Notes, in which the theory of idealism is presented, were written, is well known and need not detain us. Recently there has been a revival of interest in these early writings, provoked in part by the attempt of M. Lyon to disprove

¹ H. M. Gardiner, "The Idealism of Jonathan Edwards," *PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW*, November, 1900.

their early date.¹ It is very unfortunate that we have neither the original manuscript of the notes nor a carefully edited copy of them. Probably no other "dozen leaves of foolscap" would be of as much interest to students of American philosophy, as would be the manuscript of Edwards's notes, entitled "The Mind," if it could be found. In all probability, however, this valuable paper is hopelessly lost. There are a great many unpublished manuscripts by Edwards, but this one is not among them. The last trace we have of it is the doubtful reference in the volume printed for private circulation by Rev. A. B. Grosart in 1867. On page 15, Mr. Grosart says: "Finally I had intended adding specimens with facsimiles of the original manuscripts of the 'Treatise on the Will,' but a critical examination of the MSS. has revealed such valuable unpublished materials, such remarkable uncoverings of the processes of that master-book, such suggestive studies, and such jottings down at the moment of profound thinking and speculation under the heading of 'The Mind,' as should far exceed our limits."

There seems to be some confusion here between the "Treatise on the Will," and the Notes on "The Mind," due perhaps to the fact that Dr. Sereno Dwight, the editor of Edwards's works, suggested that the completion of the work begun in the Notes on "The Mind" would have completed a Treatise on Mental Philosophy of which one division would have been the Treatise on the Will. However the confusion is to be explained, it makes it impossible to make sure that the paper referred to by Mr. Grosart was the original of what was published by Dr. Dwight in his appendix to volume one, and which we know as the Notes on "The Mind."

Rev. Mr. Grosart claimed to have returned the manuscripts to Rev. Tryon Edwards from whom he borrowed them, and as the latter never received them, the probability is that they were lost in transmission from Scotland to America some twenty or thirty years ago. Rev. Mr. Grosart died in Dublin in the spring of 1899, and a thorough search by his son among the father's papers failed to reveal the lost manuscripts.

¹ Georges Lyon, *L'Idéalisme en Angleterre au XVIII^e Siècle*, Paris, 1888.

Undoubtedly the manuscript would prove of the greatest value could it be found. This is made very certain by the fact that the accurate editing of the original manuscript of the paper "On Being" by Professor E. C. Smyth, has revealed much of special interest. The ideal followed by editors at the time Dr. Dwight published his edition of Edwards differed greatly from that of the present time, and we therefore should expect to find that changes and modifications useful to the general reader, and not misleading as to the meaning of the author, were introduced.

It appears, according to the numbers used by Dr. Dwight to designate the order in which the Notes on The Mind were written, that the manuscript was not published entire. Of the seventy-two numbers, I find that there are missing numbers 33, 44, 46, 50, and 52, while the numbers 21, 22, 25, and 65, are used twice, thus making the total number of sections seventy-one. As the sections were arranged by the editor topically, and not in the order in which they were written, this fact has, so far as I know, not been hitherto noted. To the student of Edwards's philosophy, it is tantalizing to find that in every case the missing sections either preceded or followed a section of special importance with reference to Edwards's idealism. Of the 32 sections giving explicit evidence of idealism, seven are especially important. Four of the seven were either followed or succeeded by the missing sections. Further it would appear possible that the notes had been condensed in editing, from the fact that, whereas the "eight sheets of foolscap" containing the notes on "Natural Science" occupy 60 pages of printed matter, the nine and more leaves of foolscap containing the notes on "The Mind" occupy only 38 pages of printed matter. This could of course easily be accounted for by difference in margins, in size of handwriting, etc., or by the fact that the drawings occupy more space in the printed edition than in the manuscript. Dr. Dwight refers to the appendix as containing the whole of the collection of Notes or Comments. Without the MSS. it is impossible to satisfy ourselves on these points.

The suggestion of some that a suspicion that Edwards was inclined toward pantheism caused the suppression of certain sec-

tions, is, so far as I know, without any positive proof. It is true that Edwards outstripped his age in giving prominence to the concept of the immanence of God, and it is possible that some persons failed to distinguish immanence from pantheism. That Edwards was at no period of his life a pantheist is, however, abundantly evident from his writings.

Our investigations as to Edwards's idealism are therefore practically limited to a careful consideration of the disconnected notes as we have them in incomplete form in the appendix to Dr. Dwight's edition of Edwards's works.¹ Where not otherwise stated references are to the edition of the *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, edited by Dr. Sereno E. Dwight, 10 Vols., New York, 1829.

The explanation which lies ready at hand, as to the sources of a theory of idealism, which appeared in the same decade as *The Theory of Vision*, is that the author was a disciple of Berkeley. Professor Gardiner has already pointed out some of the objections to this explanation, which at first sight seems so natural and satisfactory. No one has found any evidence that Berkeley's works were read in New England before 1729, while the correspondence of Berkeley with Samuel Johnson, recently brought to light by Dr. Egbert Smyth, would seem to show that they were not known before that time, and at any rate completely disposes of the theory that Edwards became familiar with Berkeley under the instruction of Johnson.

¹ A complete list of the passages in Edwards's writings bearing on his theory of idealism would include the following :

Treatise on "Being" (Vol. I, pp. 706-708). "Notes on Atoms and Perfectly Solid Bodies" (Vol. I, pp. 708-713), "Notes on Things to be Written About" (Vol. I, pp. 715-727), especially Nos. 23, 44 and 47.

Notes entitled "The Mind" (Vol. I, pp. 684-702), Nos. 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 13, 15, 19, 25, 27, 28, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, 45, 51, 53, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 69.

Selections from the earlier of the manuscripts entitled "Miscellaneous Observations," Sections F, pp. 27a, 64, 94-146. Also certain sections published for the first time by Prof. Egbert C. Smyth, *Andover Review*, Vol. XIII, p. 296, and *American Journal of Theology*, Vol. I, No. 4.

Selections from "Miscellaneous Observations," *Works*, Vol. VII, p. 264. Treatise on "Original Sin," Vol. II, pp. 308-583. Treatise on "The Nature of True Religious Affections," Vol. V. Treatise on "The Chief End for which God created the World," Vol. III, pp. 1-89.

No evidence has ever been brought forward to show any knowledge of Berkeley on the part of Edwards at the time of the writing of the Notes, and the only argument in favor of such an explanation is the *a priori* one, that all theories arriving at the conclusion "no external world," which appeared in the decade 1710-1720, may be best explained by reference to the great master. On the other hand, there are serious objections against the assumption of a knowledge of Berkeley by Edwards. "It seems" as Professor Smyth says, "hardly possible that a youth, fourteen or fifteen years of age, could have read a writer so charming as Berkeley in style, diction, appeal to the imagination, and not betray in expressing his thoughts some traces of such a master."¹

Further, as Professor Fisher has pointed out,² Edwards was not the man to conceal a real obligation. It is very difficult to suppose that some trace of Berkeley would not have appeared in Edwards's later writings, had he been familiar with Berkeley. A youth who found Locke so entertaining, could not have failed to be equally impressed by the "finest example of English prose in philosophy," a writing which it has been claimed has more of the charm of Plato's dialogues than any other modern work. But of far more significance than these considerations is the fact that any one familiar with the dominating line of thought and mode of procedure in the *Treatise* or the *Dialogues* will not feel himself at home in the Notes on "The Mind," or the Notes on "Natural Science."

Edwards does not concern himself especially with a theory of vision. Newton's theory of light and the subjectivity of colors he practically takes for granted. Had he read Berkeley, the perception of things at a distance would probably have been a prominent subject of discussion. Again, at the opening of the introduction to the *Principles*, Berkeley attacks universals and shows the evils resulting from admitting abstract ideas. We can only be conscious, he maintains, of the concrete and particular, and of relations between these ideas of the concrete. Edwards, on the other hand, finds in the abstract the true realities. Berke-

¹ Egbert C. Smyth, *Some Early Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, Worcester, Mass., 1896.

² George P. Fisher, *Discussions in History and Theology*, New York, 1880.

ley attacks the reality of space. Edwards gives it supreme reality, identifying it with God. To Berkeley, spirit which is viewed as activity or power can be known only by its effects. For Edwards, God is substance, and the ideas of God which are imparted to us give us knowledge of the consciousness which is the true reality of God.

Berkeley thought of ideas of the senses as being changes in the figuration of concrete consciousness, caused by an external spirit, God, which while it was the cause of the change did not necessarily have the concrete form in himself. In other words, for Berkeley the ideas of concrete mind are not only not representative of an independent material reality, they are also neither representative nor reproductions of a mental reality existing in God. They have objective existence only in the sense that they are produced not only in our minds, but also in other concrete minds according to established laws. The objective reality then for Berkeley is a power working according to law, but which does not include its effects in itself. The relation implied in knowledge was to Berkeley a relation between spirits and their own ideas.

Edwards, on the other hand, never lost his faith in an objective reality. If the objective reality is not material, then it is mental. If it does not exist in an external world, then it exists in God. And the relation of knowledge is a relation between our ideas and the reality as it is mentally in God. Like Malebranche, he conceived reality as spread out, as it were, in the infinite expanse of God, of which we behold different parts as our gaze wanders hither and thither. Thus he says: "That which truly is the substance of all bodies is the infinitely exact and perfectly stable idea in God's mind."¹ "God supposes the existence (of all things that have ever existed), that is, he causes all changes to arise as if all these things had actually existed in such a series in some created mind, and as if created minds had comprehended all things perfectly. And though created minds do not, yet the Divine mind doth, and he orders all things according to his mind and his ideas, and these hidden things do

¹ *Works*, Vol. I, p. 673. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 669.

not only exist in the Divine idea, but in a sense in created idea, etc., etc."

It is true that his boyhood faith that all things exist side by side, as it were, in full reality in God, weakened as he advanced in his theory, and in the later notes he inclines more toward the view of Berkeley. The grand heroic conception of God comprehending and fulfilling the existence of the infinite variety of the concrete, is too sublime a conception for him to continue to hold. Just as he forsakes the argument for the existence of God based on the category of substance, for the more commonplace argument based on the category of cause, so he loses the more poetic and more pantheistic notion of God's all-comprising substance, and secures objective existence in God, on the ground of logical implication and established law of activity.

We find the two conceptions curiously combined in the Notes on The Mind, No. 36: "Things as to God exist from all eternity alike; that is, the idea is always the same and after the same mode. The existence of things, therefore, that are not actually in created minds, exists only in the power or in the determination of God that such and such ideas shall be raised in created minds upon such conditions."¹ But throughout his idealistic theory, Edwards retains the notion of knowledge as a reproduction or representation. The ideas which are produced in us have had prior existence in the mind of God at some time or other.

Now this, I take it, is a conception which distinguishes sharply Edwards's idealism from that of Berkeley, and makes it akin to that of Malebranche or Norris. To Berkeley a representative sense-perception is an absurdity. Consciousness is the thing in itself, and has no objective reference except according to the category of cause and effect. Whether or no there are some ideas unknown (to us) in the mind of God, which serve as guides or occasions to God, in his working, Berkeley declines to say. For his theory, the question is of little importance.

Berkeley, in other words, destroys entirely the objective reference of knowledge. Knowledge becomes a relation between

¹ *Works*, Vol. I, p. 671.

mind and its ideas. The ideas do not represent anything. *They simply are.* They are phenomena which serve certain purposes, which might perhaps be equally well achieved by a complicated system of beats, such as the Morse telegraphic alphabet. For Edwards, knowledge is of something not ourselves. He never approaches the essentially sceptical theory of Berkeley.

In this connection it is interesting to notice that the development of thought in Berkeley and Edwards was in opposite directions. As has been said, Edwards tended away from the Platonic theory of Malebranche to the more mechanical and naturalistic theory, agreeing with Locke in emphasizing the category of cause. Berkeley, on the other hand, while, as a young man, thinking almost entirely in terms of causality approaches, in his latest writings, the Platonic conception. This will be recognized on examining the *Siris*, *a chain of philosophical reflexions and inquiries*, published by Berkeley in 1744.

In the *Siris* we find "a restatement of his theory of power and causation which runs through and is the very essence of Berkeley's philosophy" (Fraser). Berkeley shows how the concept of God as cause is necessary in order to escape pantheism. But finally he admits that there may be truth in the conception of Plato; in fact his writings properly understood contain "not only the most valuable learning of Athens and Greece, but also a treatise of the most remote traditions and early science of the East." So that we may assume intelligible realities only dimly discovered by sensuous perception which regulate the phenomenal world and the individual mind. So that here, as Fraser says, "The phenomenal nominalism for which the early philosophy of Berkeley has been celebrated, is modified and supplemented by a Platonic or transcendental realism." As Edward Caird has remarked: "It is only in view of his last work, the *Siris*, that Berkeley can be reckoned along with Plato and the other idealists as a supporter of the doctrine that real things are apprehended by pure reason, while phenomena only are known through sense experience. In Berkeley's earlier works, phenomena, or, as he calls them, ideas, appear, as the objects of consciousness, the only real objects which there are or can be." ¹

¹ E. Caird, *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, London, 1889, Vol. I., p. 620.

This wide divergence on a primary point, and the fact that Edwards begins where Berkeley ends, and that they develop in contrary directions, as well as the different modes of treatment of the subject, the different positions on the question of abstract ideas and of free will, make it very evident that Edwards could not have become acquainted with idealism first through Berkeley. Whatever of resemblance there may be, must be accounted for by the fact of their common sources, Locke, Malebranche, Descartes, Newton, and Clark.

At the same time it is true, as Professor Allen says, that "the reading of the notes gives the impression that Edwards is stepping into a heritage of thought rather than discovering principles for the first time. He seems to be more concerned also with the application of the new doctrine than with its demonstration or exposition."¹ There is no trace that he prized this theory above all his other reflections, as he must have done had he felt the pride of the inventor. Internal evidence as well as the youth of the author, then, makes it probable that there was some other influence besides Locke and Newton at work upon Edwards's thought.

When I read the Notes on The Mind for the first time, I was at once reminded of Malebranche, and it has been pointed out by more than one, that Edwards in some points seems to reproduce Malebranche's line of thought rather than Berkeley's.² It is possible and indeed probable that Malebranche was known to Mr. Cutler, Edwards's teacher in his last college year 1719-1720. Mr. Cutler graduated at Harvard in 1701. He was made president and professor at New Haven in 1719.

In the life of Samuel Johnson by T. B. Chandler, we read: "Yet Mr. Johnson observes that but a very few discovered an inclination or curiosity to consult any of the above mentioned excellent writers except Messrs. Cutler, Eliot, Hart, Whittlesey, Wetmore, Brown, and himself."³ This is a reference to the books in the college library at that time; and shows that Mr. Cutler

¹ A. V. G. Allen, *Life of Jonathan Edwards*, Boston, 1889, p. 18.

² M. Lyon, *L'Idéalisme en Angleterre*, pp. 430, 431.

³ T. B. Chandler, *Life of Samuel Johnson*, New York, 1805, p. 101.

was in the habit of reading in the library. I find, on examining the catalogue lists, that among the books in the library at this time (1718) was an English translation of Father Malebranche's *Treatise on the Search of Truth*. A folio with date of London, 1700, is still in the library, and is probably the book referred to in the catalogue. To suppose, however, that Malebranche was the immediate source of Edwards's idealism, would involve us in great difficulties. It is doubtful whether it would be an easier transition from Locke to Edwards by way of Malebranche, than from Locke to Edwards directly. Further, he could scarcely have founded his own system on the ruins of the system of Malebranche, without leaving some trace of the conflict; but no such trace is to be found.

Still another work may have influenced his thought somewhat.¹ In No. 40 of the Notes on "The Mind," Edwards refers to Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, and quotes a paragraph from Plato. Cudworth's work, a large folio of nine hundred pages, is a mine of philosophical knowledge, and Edwards may have received many hints from its exhaustive treatment of the theories of materialism and atheism in all periods of philosophy. It is to be supposed that the descriptions there given of the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle would have been especially fruitful, but I have not been able to trace definitely any points of contact between the Notes of Edwards and Cudworth's work. We have no means of knowing how much of the nine hundred pages Edwards read. Perhaps the special passage quoted from Plato may have been called to his attention by one of the tutors.

In the search for an intermediate link between Locke and Edwards, no one has, so far as I know, ever suggested that the book which turned Edwards's thoughts toward idealism was the tract entitled *Clavis Universalis*, by Arthur Collier, London, 1713. A careful comparative study of Collier and Edwards, has convinced me, however, that there are sufficient grounds for supposing that it was Collier and not Berkeley who turned the mind of the youthful Edwards in the direction of idealism.

Arthur Collier was born four years before Berkeley, in the

¹ *Works*, Vol. I, p. 673.

year 1680. From his twenty-fourth year until his death (1704-1732) he was a rector in the English Church. "Collier reached the conclusion that there is no external world, at the age of twenty-three."¹ "Among his manuscripts under date of 1708 (the year before the publication of Berkeley's *Theory of Vision*) there remains the outline of an essay in three chapters, on the question of the visible world being without us or not. In 1712 he penned two essays, still in manuscript, one on *Substance and Accident*, and the other termed *Clavis Universalis*; and at length in 1713 there issued from the press the *Clavis Universalis* or "A New Inquiry After Truth, being a Demonstration of the Non-existence or Impossibility of an External World."² The title page of this work bears the motto, "*Vulgi assensus et approbatio circa materiam difficilem est certum argumentum falsitat isistius opinionis cui assentitur.*"³ It is a strange coincidence that this work should have appeared about the same time as the works of Berkeley. Professor Fraser says, "There is no evidence that either author drew his thought from the other."⁴ Still it would not be strange if Collier had been confirmed in his youthful belief by the publication of Berkeley's *Principles* (1710). "So far as the speculation of the English Rector agrees with that of the Dublin Fellow," to quote Fraser again, "the agreement may be referred to the common philosophical point of view at the time. The scientific world was preparing for that reconstruction of its conception of what sensible things and externality mean, which has since clarified and simplified physical research. Collier in his own way was not wanting in force, but he expressed his acute thoughts in awkward English, with the pedantry of a Schoolman, and wanted that sentiment and imagination and constant recognition of the relation of speculation to human action, which in the course of time made the contemporary writings of Berkeley an influence that has left its mark upon all later thought. . . . The starting point of Berkeley was more in the current philosophy of Locke. Collier produced

¹ R. Benson, *Memoirs of Collier*, London, 1837, p. 13.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³ Malebranche, *De Iniquitate Veritatis*, Lib. III, p. 794.

⁴ A. C. Fraser, *Life of Berkeley*, Oxford, 1871, p. 62.

the meditative reasonings of a recluse student of Malebranche and the Schoolmen."

The *Clavis Universalis* is a crude, rough piece of work, compared to the *Principles* or *Dialogues* of Berkeley. Presented in such a garb, idealism would appeal only to the mind accustomed to deal with bare abstract ideas, and to delight in paradoxes.

The external evidence I have discovered, which would indicate that Edwards had read the *Clavis Universalis*, would doubtless not be sufficient on which to base a sure conclusion, were it not also considered that this work meets the requirements in many general points. The whole attitude of Edwards towards idealism is that of Collier rather than of Berkeley. The resemblance to Malebranche and the difference from Malebranche are both explained, if we find the source of the resemblance in the transformed theory of Malebranche presented by Collier. The fact that Edwards read Collier in the light of Locke and Newton, would explain any resemblance there may be between Edwards and Berkeley.

To consider first the external evidence. There is no evidence that I have been able to find that the *Clavis Universalis* was in the college library, as were the works of Newton and Locke, at the time of Edwards. This, however, is no decisive objection, since the *Clavis Universalis* was an inexpensive pamphlet of a hundred pages, and might have been purchased by Edwards, as we know Samuel Johnson to have purchased philosophical books during his college days.

Collier, so far as I know, is never mentioned by Edwards in his works. It may be objected that since Edwards "was not a man to conceal a real obligation," he could not have been influenced by Collier. On the other hand, no credit is given to any instructor for suggesting any of his numerous lines of thought, and therefore it would be possible to suppose that Edwards gained his knowledge of Collier indirectly through the lectures of one of his professors. Besides we do not intend to suggest that any of the Notes were not in a proper sense Edwards's own production. Even if he read Collier, by the time he wrote the Notes the ideas gained from the reading were well assimilated

and made thoroughly his own. Further, there are a number of Notes which we cannot doubt were suggested by the reading of Locke, and yet in which no reference to Locke appears. I have shown elsewhere ground for supposing that the Notes were not the production of one just converted to idealism. By the time, therefore, that he wrote the Notes, the influence of Collier must have been rather unconscious and implicit than direct.

Finally, it must be remembered that it would not have been strange had he omitted all references to authorities in his Notes, since they were intended for his own inspection only. These two arguments then, which have been allowed some weight in connection with the question of Berkeleyan influence, because there was practically no argument from internal evidence, may be considered as indecisive in connection with Collier.

The positive arguments are as follows: In a letter of July 21, 1719,¹ Edwards, writing to his father, entreats him to get for him the *Art of Thinking*, "which," he adds, "I am persuaded would be no less profitable than the other (Alstead's *Geometry* and Gassendi's *Astronomy*, a pair of compasses and a scale) necessary to me."

Collier in his *Clavis Universalis* writes: "And to this purpose I find it said by a very judicious author (*Art of Thinking*) that it is good to tire and fatigue the mind with such kind of difficulties (as the divisibility of matter, etc.), in order to tame its presumption, and to make it less daring ever to oppose its feeble light to the truths proposed to it in the Gospel." Edwards, like Collier, does not name the author of the *Art of Thinking*. The reference is, of course, to the English translation² of the well-known Port Royal Logic, *L'art de penser*, published by Arnauld and Nicole, who made use of an earlier treatise by Pascal. We cannot prove, of course, that it was from Collier that Edwards learned of the *Art of Thinking*, but we can readily understand how such a passage as that quoted by Collier would have excited the curiosity of Edwards. Further, the date of the letter, July, 1719, towards the end of his junior year, is the date at which we have reason to suppose he first became acquainted with idealism.

¹ *Works*, Vol. I, p. 32.

² *Logic or Art of Thinking*, London, 1665.

The argument for Collier's influence rests principally on the following observations.

In No. 27 of the Notes on The Mind, we read under the title of Existence: "If we had only the sense of seeing, we should not be as ready to conclude the visible world to have been in existence independent of perception, as we do, because the ideas we have of the sense of feeling are as much mere ideas as those we have by the sense of seeing. But we know that the things that are objects of this sense, all that the mind views by seeing, are merely mental existences, because all these things with all their modes, do exist in a looking glass, where all acknowledge they exist only mentally."

Taken by itself, this is an obscure passage. A hasty reader might suppose that Edwards was comparing the mind to a mirror, and hence might truly say that all these things with all their modes exist in the mind as in a mirror. So Locke puts it: "These simple ideas when offered to the mind, the understanding can no more refuse to have nor alter when they are imprinted, nor blot them out and make new ones itself, than a mirror can refuse, alter or obliterate the images or ideas which the objects set before it do therein produce."¹

But this is not what Edwards means, as will be seen on more careful examination. His argument is rather somewhat like this. A man could see all that other men see, were he compelled to see everything indirectly by the help of a mirror. Under these circumstances, things would seem to be in the mirror, but this is absurd. Therefore they must be in the mind, so that if sight were our only form of sensation, we should readily be convinced how deceptive is the apparent externality of things.

Now if this had been Edwards's own argument, he must have explained it more fully than we find it in the Notes. Evidently it is set down more to remind him of the argument, like the heads of a discourse, than as an exposition. The obscurity of the Note however, becomes clear when we read it in the light of the *Clavis Universalis*, for we find that this argument of the looking glass was a special favorite of Collier's. It appears no less than three times in the brief hundred pages of the tract, and we also find

¹ Locke, *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*, Book II, Chap. I.

Collier using the same argument in a letter written to Solomon Low, 1714, and in a letter written to Mr. Mist, 1720.¹

The sections in the *Clavis Universalis*² are as follows: "Again lastly, it is a common saying that an object of perception exists in, or in dependence on its respective faculty, and of these objects, there are many who will reckon with me light, sounds, colours, and even some material things such as trees, houses, etc., which are seen, as we say, in a looking glass, but which are, or ought to be owned to have no existence, but in or respectively on the minds or faculties of those who perceive them. But to please all parties at once, I affirm that I know of no manner in which an object of perception exists in or on its respective faculty which I will not admit in this place to be a just description of that manner of in-existence, after which all matter that exists is affirmed by me to exist in mind. Nevertheless, were I to speak my mind freely, I should choose to compare it to the in-existence of some, rather than of other objects of perception, particularly such as are objects of the sense of vision and of these, those more especially which are allowed by others to exist wholly in the mind or visive faculty, such as objects seen in a looking glass by men distempered, light-headed, ecstatic, etc., where not only colours but entire bodies are perceived or seen. For these cases are exactly parallel with that existence which I affirm of all matter, body, or extension whatsoever."³

Again on page 17: "Take the usual act of seeing objects in a looking glass. Here I see sun, moon, and stars, even a whole expanded world as distinctly, as externally as any material objects are capable of being seen. Now the question (if it can be any question) is where are these things? Do they exist within or without my soul or perceptive faculty? If it be said that they exist without, we still ask where? . . . I expect to find some either of the learned or unlearned part of the world who upon the first suggestion will very readily agree with me that the objects seen as in the glass are not external to the mind which sees them, and indeed, this is to me so simply evident that I cannot

¹ These letters will be found in Benson's *Memoirs of Collier*, pp. 23 and 44.

² Introduction, p. 3.

³ A. C. Collier, *Clavis Universalis*, Parr's edition, London, 1837.

induce my mind to set formally about the proof of it. . . . I will now conclude that the objects seen as in a glass are not external to the soul or visive faculty of him that seeth them and consequently that I have here given an instance of a visible object, as much external to appearance as any object whatsoever, but which is not indeed external." And on p. 98: "But lastly if after all this endeavour he yet finds it difficult (as I believe he certainly will) to keep the edge of his attention fixed, so as not to think it still more evident that the visible world is, than that it is not external, let him practise with himself an easy but a very useful art, which is to use himself to meditate on this subject with either his eye or imagination fixed on a looking-glass."

I think that it will appear very clear that Note No. 27 is to be interpreted by the help of the above quotations. The obscure sense in which the illustration is used makes this probable. The ready assumption by Edwards that the alternative is between things being in the looking-glass or in the mind makes it probable that he received it on authority. Most significant of all, however, is the fact, that the illustration of the looking glass is used by Edwards in exactly the same connection as that in which it is used by Collier, viz., to show that a theory of idealism is more easily accepted if confined to sensations of vision, than if other sensations are included. These three facts taken together prove beyond doubt, I think, either a direct or indirect knowledge of Collier's work by Edwards.

If we proceed now to the more general evidence, we notice that whereas Berkeley laid great stress on the theory of color and vision, and was at pains to explain the perception of outness or apparent distance of objects seen, Collier and Edwards (at first, at least) both take their theory of color sensation for granted, and instead of attempting to explain the perception of things in space, deny the validity of the perception on the ground that it is not infallible. Thus Collier, p. 14: "If any one doubts whether such things as sounds, smells, tastes, heat, pain, pleasure, etc., be within or without the souls or perceptive faculties of those who sense them, they must excuse me if I am unwilling to digress so far as to undertake the proof of what I here sup-

pose ; and that partly on account of its (self) evidence, but I am content to say chiefly because the thing has already been done often particularly by Mr. Descartes, Mr. Malebranche and Mr. Norris in several parts of their much celebrated writings, whither I choose to refer my inquisitive reader. . . . The next instance shall be of light and colours which are allowed to be objects properly visible. These appear or seem as much at a distance or external as any objects whatsoever, yet scarce anything is more evident than that they are not so. In this I speak more particularly to Cartesians, and on this occasion I desire to ask them how has it come to pass that they, who all agree that light and colours are not external, should yet happen to overlook the same conclusion with relation to the bodies, subjects, or extensions which sustain these accidents ? ”

Compare with this what Edwards says in the remainder of Note No. 27, part of which was quoted above : “ It is now agreed upon by every knowing philosopher, that colours are not really in the things, no more than pain is in a needle ; but strictly nowhere else but in the mind. But yet I think that colour may have an existence out of the mind *with equal reason as anything* in body has any existence out of the mind, beside the very substance of the body itself, which is nothing but the divine power or rather the constant exertion of it.” ¹

To what extent Edwards was indebted to Collier it is impossible to decide. If Edwards merely followed the advice of Collier to his readers (p. 99) and “ carried about with him not the body of the present treatise, nor so much as one argument of it in his memory, but only the conclusion, viz., no external world, which is just what is in the inscription on the title page,” while he may not have found it true as Collier said “ that with this, as with a key, he will find an easy solution of almost all the general questions which he has been used to account very difficult or perhaps indissoluble,” he doubtless found it sufficient to shed new light on the unsolved problems of Locke and Newton, and to discover to him what at first, at least, seemed a satisfactory solution.

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¹ *Works*, Vol. I, p. 668.